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ABSTRACT

Results of a self-assessment of the doctoral program in higher education at the University of Georgia are presented. The Graduate Program Self-Assessment Service questionnaires were administered to 43 graduates, 12 currently-enrolled graduate students, and 14 faculty members. Areas of assessment for the graduates included: average number of years since graduation, type of employment, productivity, and reasons for earning the doctorate. For currently-enrolled students, concerns were: ethnic background, current jobs, preferred job activity, financial aid, grade point average, and number of years since receiving the undergraduate degree. Areas of concern for faculty included academic rank, full-versus part-time employment, highest degree held, time spent in instructional and noninstructional tasks, and time since receiving the doctoral degree. Faculty, student, and alumni ratings were also obtained on: the learning environment, scholarly excellence, quality of teaching, faculty concern for students, the curriculum, departmental procedures, available resources, student commitment/motivation, student satisfaction, student assistantships, departmental performance, faculty work environment, dissertation experiences, and faculty research and professional activities.
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SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT:
THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN HIGHER EDUCATION
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

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by

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THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

The doctoral program in higher education at the University of Georgia was developed in response to requests from the College of Education and other academic units on the UGA campus. Instruction at the doctoral level was not an original charge to the Institute of Higher Education and was not envisioned as a responsibility in 1964 when the Institute was initiated. The Institute was, however, the most logical and the best staffed unit within which to develop a doctoral program in higher education. Program planning and course development began in 1968, in cooperation with Dr. Daniel J. Sorrells who was then in the College of Education, and the first students were admitted in 1969. Two years later, three of those students became the first graduates of the doctoral program.

When the first degrees were awarded, an administrative decision placed the Institute of Higher Education within the College of Education for purposes of the graduate program. Explicitly stated at that time and frequently reinforced since was the expectation that the Institute would remain a service and research agency of the University of Georgia. The Institute thus acquired dual responsibilities as a department of instruction within the College of Education and as a public service agency of the University of Georgia. No funds have been allocated for a department of higher education, but administrative/budgetary relations have been both cooperative and efficient.

The doctoral program thus began under ambiguous circumstances, and it has continued to operate under arrangements different from the traditional university/college/department hierarchy. The Institute of Higher Education is a unique administrative or budgetary unit of the University of Georgia. It is the only unit on the UGA campus with explicit service, research, and instructional functions; other units have combinations of these functions but the Institute is the only unit combining all three. The doctoral program in higher education is also unique in that no coursework is offered at either the master's or the undergraduate level. The doctoral program has been developed within the framework of the University of Georgia's commitment to public service, and a substantial portion of the program's success must be attributed to the different learning environment an institute or center can provide. The doctoral program in higher education has received national attention for the opportunities given graduate students in the Institute's service functions and activities (Dressel and Mayhew, 1974).

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The doctoral program in higher education was initially conceived as an interdisciplinary program of study that would appeal strongly to stu-

dents with backgrounds in the behavioral and social sciences. More specifically, it was intended that students maintain disciplinary contact with the fields they studied at the master's level. It was expected that students with masters in the behavioral and social sciences would enter the doctoral program and would seek to maintain ties with those disciplines by taking at least 20 hours in this major field at the master's level.

Neither staff selection nor student interests remained compatible with the original intents. The Institute's service commitments called for experience and expertise in academic administration, student services, and program development; the learning needs and interests of applicants reflected backgrounds in educational specialties instead of the behavioral and social sciences. Degree requirements have continued throughout, however, to specify 20 hours outside the College of Education. Analysis of doctoral coursework shows that sociology, political science, and management have been the most popular fields of study outside the College of Education (Holbrook & Galvin, 1981).

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

A comprehensive re-assessment of the doctoral program in higher education has been recommended by the Committee on Graduate Courses and Graduate Programs. This recommendation stems from the report of a graduate school review committee appointed to review the doctoral program in higher education three years ago. In recommending the continuance of the doctoral program in higher education, the review committee expressed reservation about the placement of a graduate program within a service institute. Members of the review committee also questioned the location of the Institute of Higher Education at some distance from the College of Education and had obvious difficulties in understanding the functions and activities of the Institute as they related to the doctoral program. Although the criticisms of the review committee were answered by the Institute staff in a follow-up report, the Institute staff's report was not made available to the Committee on Graduate Courses and Graduate Programs. As the result, the Committee on Graduate Courses and Graduate Programs responded to the review committee's criticisms concerning program objectives, their relationship with program structure and content, and the advisability of a doctoral program within a service agency of the University. These are the criticisms that the self-assessment report primarily addresses.

ETS SELF-ASSESSMENT SERVICE

The Graduate Program Self-Assessment Service provided by Educational Testing Service (ETS) uses confidential questionnaires which are

completed by teaching faculty, currently enrolled students, and recent graduates. The questionnaires have been developed in cooperation with committees of graduate deans and faculty members and are designed to obtain information about "quality related program characteristics in seven areas": program purposes, faculty training and accomplishments, student ability and performance, resources, academic and social environments of the program, program processes and procedures, and alumni achievements.

Each questionnaire contains about 60 statements concerning program characteristics with an agree-disagree or poor-to-excellent format for response. Many statements appear on all three questionnaires, thus allowing comparisons of faculty, student, and alumni opinions. When completed, the questionnaires are returned in sealed envelopes, with a brief program description, to ETS for analysis. No names are requested on the questionnaires and all data are reported in summary form only by ETS. The self-assessment service is supervised by the Graduate Records Examination Board and is sponsored by the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States. The questionnaires themselves are well-designed, easily completed, and particularly relevant to the purposes and functions of graduate programs.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

In the fall of 1982, a total of 25 graduate students were engaged in the doctoral program at some stage of academic progression. Forty-six graduates had completed the program and were employed in various capacities. In addition to students and alumni, 14 faculty members were identified as having served on the advisory and examining committees of doctoral students in higher education. Some faculty members closely involved in the program, however, could not be contacted. Dr. Daniel J. Sorrells, Professor Emeritus of Higher Education, was on the west coast and could not complete a questionnaire even though he had been actively involved in the program from its beginning and had served on virtually all the advisory and examining committees of the 46 graduates.

All questionnaires were distributed with a covering memorandum from the Director of the Institute of Higher Education, stating the purposes of the questionnaire and requesting cooperation in its completion. Forty-three of the 46 graduates returned their questionnaires in time for inclusion in the study. Another questionnaire was returned on the day following transmission of the questionnaires to ETS. Of the currently enrolled graduate students, 21 returned their questionnaires for inclusion in the study. The response rate of 84% would have been higher had the location and status of four students been more readily determined. Of the 14 faculty members completing questionnaires, five are professional staff members in the Institute of Higher Education while the other nine are University of Georgia faculty members in other departments of instruction. This fact should be noted because the

majority of the responding faculty members consists of faculty members in other departments who teach doctoral students in higher education most of the 20 hours outside education they are required to take.

ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The most relevant findings of the assessment pertain to the 43 graduates who supplied background information on their subsequent careers. For this group, the average number of years since graduation was four. The average number of years spent acquiring the degree was three. It is interesting, however, that the average number of years from undergraduate degree to completion of the doctoral degree was 14, a fact reflecting the admission requirement of a master's degree and work experience in a collegiate setting prior to entering the program. The academic achievement of the graduates is reflected in a 3.02 average undergraduate grade-point-average and a 3.81 average grade-point-average at the graduate level.

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT: A plurality (37%) of the graduates are employed in PhD-granting universities; 23% are employed in four-year colleges while 21% are employed in community or two-year colleges. Two of the graduates have returned to secondary education, one of them being the Head Master of a large preparatory school in Oklahoma. Two others are self-employed or in private practice, while three students identify their place of employment as a non-profit agency and one graduate indicates that he is employed in government. No graduate is employed in business or industry, although one graduate just recently returned to a college campus after serving as a management recruiter/developer for a large industrial concern.

PRIMARY DUTIES: In describing their work, 74% of the graduates state that they are engaged in administration or management. Nine percent designate their primary activity as teaching, while seven percent have a combination of research and teaching duties, and at least one person is engaged in research only. One graduate identifies his/her primary activity as the provision of professional services. All responding graduates are employed full-time and report an average income of \$31,278. Only three graduates report an annual income under \$20,000, and two graduates report an annual income over \$50,000. When asked about their current use of the doctoral training they received, 79% of the graduates responded that they use their doctoral training "quite a bit" or "a great deal." Only one graduate reported that he did not use his doctoral training in his current employment duties.

When asked if they were under-employed, 65% of the graduates responded "No" and 28% responded "somewhat." Three graduates believe they are definitely under-employed at the present time, a condition that is dictated

in at least two cases by the employment opportunities available to spouses. When asked about the help they received in finding a job, the graduates did not attribute a great deal of help to the Institute's formal or informal efforts, the University's Placement Office, or openings listed with professional associations. Apparently the one significant source of assistance for the graduates was the effort of individual professors. Thirty-three percent of the graduates thus replied that they had found the assistance of individual professors "extremely helpful."

PRODUCTIVITY: The productivity of the graduates is indicated by the appreciable number of publications since the completion of their degree. The average number for the group is 13, with an average number of seven books or monographs published and an average number of five articles or reviews. Twenty-three percent of the graduates stated they have not published at all, a condition that reflects, no doubt, their respective job duties and responsibilities. No graduate has received a post-doctoral fellowship and 72% of the group have done no further research in the area of their dissertation. Five of the graduates have published articles based on their dissertation. In the past two years, the group has made an average number of seven presentations at professional meetings, and one graduate has served as a visiting professor. The average age of the graduates is now forty-two years. The group is predominantly male (72%) but the number of women graduates has increased in recent years.

REASONS FOR EARNING DOCTORATE: In response to a question about their primary purpose in pursuing the doctoral degree, 81% indicated that their purpose was preparation for professional practice. One graduate indicated that he had prepared for research and teaching, while three graduates indicated personal enrichment, and four individuals indicated "other." When asked how well their doctoral program prepared them for the primary purpose they had indicated earlier, 70% of the graduates responded "extremely well." An additional 28% responded "fairly well"; only one individual indicated that the doctoral program had not prepared him well for his current duties and responsibilities.

CURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENTS

Students who are presently involved in the doctoral program in higher education display slightly different characteristics from the graduates. Although 76% of the current students are male, the group includes one American Indian, two Oriental or Asian students, and one Latin American student. Three of the students currently enrolled thus are foreign students. None of the currently enrolled students are black; one of the graduates is. The average age of the group is 36 years.

A majority (52%) of the currently enrolled students are pursuing their degrees while employed and indicate that they will remain in their current positions upon completion of the degree. Three students expect to return to their previous employer but to a new position. Only five of the students indicate that they do not expect to return to their previous employer. A majority of the students (54%) indicate that they would like a post-doctoral fellowship upon completion of the degree. Their preferred job activity, however, is administration or management (76%), teaching (10%) and a combination of research and teaching (10%). Forty-three percent of the students would like to work in a PhD-granting university, while 38% expressed a preference for four-year colleges and 19% expressed a preference for community colleges. These are the only preferences expressed by the currently enrolled students. None of them expect to go into business, or industry, or government, or to work in a non-profit agency.

Sixty-two percent of the currently enrolled students receive no financial aid while pursuing their doctoral studies. The average grade-point-average for the group is 3.77, a figure that may be compared with a 3.10 they earned at the undergraduate level. Forty-eight percent of the group state that they are enrolled full-time, while 38% indicate that they are enrolled part-time. This leaves 14% who were not enrolled at the time they completed the questionnaire.

For the group, the average number of years between undergraduate degree and enrollment in the doctoral program is nine years. The average number of years of enrollment in the program itself is three years and the expected number of years remaining for completion of degree requirements is two years. Two of the currently enrolled students have published four or more articles in professional journals.

TEACHING FACULTY

Faculty members serving on the advisory and the examining committees of students in the doctoral program are, as would be expected, predominantly full professors (57%). Two of the professors, however, hold rank at the associate level, while another two hold rank as assistant professors. With the exception of one part-time position, these faculty members are employed full-time. Sixty-four percent of the group hold the PhD, while 36% hold another doctoral degree. A majority of the group (79%) are tenured at the University of Georgia.

The average number of years since receiving their own doctoral degree is 18 years and the average number of years of teaching experience in a university is 17 years. As a group, these faculty members spend 46% of their time teaching and advising students, 25% of their time in research or scholarship, and 29% of their time in administration or other duties. The average age of the group is 50 years.

In the past two years, faculty members in this group have made an average number of eight presentations at regional or national professional meetings. As a group, they spend an average number of 17 days away from the campus in professional activities such as presentations and consultations. Their scholarly productivity is reflected in an average of 40 journal articles and/or reviews, an average of ten books or monographs, and an average total of at least 50 publications. In the last three years, the teaching faculty in this group have published an average of eight professional articles or book chapters, two scholarly book reviews, one book, one edited book, and two monographs. Three of the faculty members have published over 75 articles, reviews or monographs during their careers and indicate from 16 to 25 articles and reviews in the past three years.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

As a means of analyzing and interpreting the detailed questionnaire data, ETS has developed scales for selected clusters of questionnaire items. Sixteen scales have been developed and the mean scale score for faculty, students, and alumni on each of these scales is reported in Table 1. As shown in the table, each scale is a four-point scale with the direction of the scale being dependent on the response format. This means simply that some scales have been inverted so as to present preferred or favorable responses as "high" scale scores.

The distinctive feature of the reported scale scores is the consistency of opinion reflected by faculty members, students, and graduates of the doctoral program. With a single exception, the average scale score reported for the three groups exceeds 3.1 on a four-point scale. That single exception is the rated satisfaction of currently enrolled students with their assistantships, a finding based on the responses of only four students and excluding the opinions of many graduates who served as student assistants.

The mean ratings reported in Table 1 are, of course, subject to interpretation. One rule of thumb that might be applied is to look at the mean ratings in relation to their standard deviations. If the respective standard deviation is relatively small (i.e. less than .50), the mean rating should reflect significant agreement on that particular scale. If the standard deviation is relatively large (i.e. greater than .50), this could suggest a variance of opinion that should be examined carefully. For example, the mean rating of graduates or alumni on the "Faculty Concern for Students" scale is 3.36 but the standard deviation is .63, one of the larger indices of variation found for the 16 scales. For ratings on a four-point scale, this variance of opinion implies that some respondents have expressed "unfavorable" or "dissatisfied" opinions concerning faculty attitudes toward students. Another way of stating this implication is that not all graduates of the program have enjoyed a thoroughly satisfying relationship with all members of the faculty -- an obser-

TABLE 1
FACULTY, STUDENT, AND GRADUATE RATINGS ON SELF-ASSESSMENT SCALES

Scale Descriptions	Group	Mean	SD
1. Environment for Learning:			
Mutual respect and concern between students and faculty; helpfulness of other students; openness to new ideas and points of view.	Faculty	3.37	.47
	Students	3.36	.44
	Alumni	3.31	.48
2. Scholarly Excellence:			
Accomplishments of faculty; ability of students; and intellectual stimulation in the program.	Faculty	3.20	.61
	Students	3.38	.46
	Alumni	3.27	.62
3. Quality of Teaching:			
Faculty receptivity to new ideas; their helpfulness to students in coursework; grading standards; preparation for class.	Faculty		
	Students	3.30	.45
	Alumni	3.19	.56
4. Faculty Concern for Students:			
Interest in professional development of students; awareness of student needs and interests; availability to students; openness to suggestions.	Faculty	3.43	.52
	Students	3.27	.55
	Alumni	3.36	.63
5. Curriculum:			
Variety and depth of coursework; program flexibility; opportunities for individual projects; relations with other departments.	Faculty	3.42	.56
	Students	3.18	.60
	Alumni	3.25	.50
6. Departmental Procedures:			
Relevance of policies and actions; advisement and evaluation of students; administration of degree requirements.	Faculty	3.36	.45
	Students	3.23	.53
	Alumni	3.32	.55

Ratings on Self-Assessment Scales (continued)

7.	Available Resources: Adequacy of financial and physical resources; quality of facilities such as library and computer center; their availability to students.	Faculty	3.28	.55
		Students	3.18	.72
		Alumni	3.32	.60
8.	Student Commitment/Motivation: Enthusiastic involvement with field of study; willingness to do unassigned readings; efforts to prepare for classes and to persist in program.	Faculty	3.21	.38
		Students	3.39	.54
		Alumni		
9.	Student Satisfaction: Judgments of students about what they have learned, their preparation for career, and willingness to recommend programs to others.	Faculty		
		Students	3.52	.55
		Alumni	3.59	.50
10.	Student Assistantships: Contribution of experience as an assistant to academic and professional development.	Faculty		
		Students	2.75	.70
		Alumni		
11.	Departmental Performance: Faculty judgments about teaching, departmental management and planning, and direction or guidance given.	Faculty	3.15	.41
		Students		
		Alumni		
12.	Faculty Work Environment: Satisfaction with objectives and procedures, academic freedom, opportunities to participate in decisions, and relations with others.	Faculty	3.38	.53
		Students		
		Alumni		

Ratings on Self-Assessment Scales (continued)

13.	Dissertation Experiences: Judgments about dissertation topics and requirements; committees, standards applied, and relevance to professional development.	Faculty		
		Students		
		Alumni	3.22	.44
14.	Value for Employment: Relevance of education for subsequent careers; judgments about coursework, faculty, and academic standards.	Faculty		
		Students		
		Alumni	3.22	.44
15.	Faculty Research: Recognition given faculty in research, scholarly writing, service as editors and referees, and obtaining research funds.	Faculty	46%	.35
16.	Professional Activities: Service of faculty on national committees or panels, in regional or national associations, and other kinds of professional visibility.	Faculty	67%	.25

NOTE: Number of respondents will vary by one (i.e. 13 faculty responses instead of 14) or more because all respondents did not answer all questions.

Scale 10 shows ratings of only four students presently serving as graduate assistants.

Where no mean ratings are shown for a group, that scale was not part of the questionnaire completed by that group.

vation frequently made in other contexts about graduate education in general.

A more direct implication of such variances in response would be the "targeting" of areas, activities, or functions that the professional staff should study more closely. This is readily accomplished by examining the specific items that make up a particular scale. It should be possible to identify the "specifics of the case" and it should be possible for the professional staff to improve the particular activity or function about which survey respondents have expressed some degree of reservation.

ANALYSIS OF SCALES AND ITEMS

The data reported by ETS permit intensive analysis of the 16 scales and the particular items that comprise each scale. For the purposes of this report, scales and items are analyzed as they relate to the criticisms of the review committee. In most instances, it will suffice to show the mean ratings by respondent group for specific items constituting a scale. Where the frequency of responses to a specific item can be informative, further analysis of the item responses will be presented. Throughout the report, however, the major emphasis should be placed on survey findings that have implications for the continued improvement of the doctoral program in higher education.

Administrative and Fiscal Control

If the placement of a doctoral program in a service institute was "the basic problem" to the review committee, the location of the doctoral program is not a problem of any consequence to responding faculty, students, and alumni. The scales for learning environment, scholarly excellence, quality of teaching, and faculty concern for students may be examined in detail - with no implication that the doctoral program in higher education is physically or academically misplaced.

A break-out of the items on the learning environment scale firmly endorses a climate or atmosphere for learning in which differences in viewpoint are encouraged, students and professors enjoy each other's respect, and students work cooperatively in meeting academic demands. Lesser ratings are recorded for "team or joint effort" within the Institute and by the alumni for "receptivity to new ideas." Ratings for the former are related, no doubt, to the "loose style" of administration within the Institute and the rating by alumni is explained, in part, by the manner in which the doctoral program was originally structured. Several changes in the organization of the program have already been effected, but the lack of team effort is not seen as necessitating a new style of administration or management.

Mean ratings for the items dealing with scholarly excellence or productivity are consistently computed as 3.0 or higher. There is

TABLE 2
BREAKDOWN OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENT SCALE

Item	Mean Ratings by:		
	Faculty	Student	Alumni
Encouragement of different scholarly views	3.31	3.52	3.51
Mutual respect between students and professors	3.62	3.57	3.63
Team or joint effort within department	2.77	2.95	2.69
Lack of exploitation of students by professors	3.46	3.15	3.33
Mutual support and help among students in meeting academic demands	3.62	3.81	3.77
Receptivity to new ideas and ways of doing things	3.46	3.10	2.88

TABLE 3
SCHOLARLY EXCELLENCE AND FACULTY CONCERN FOR STUDENTS

Item	Mean Ratings by:		
	Faculty	Student	Alumni
Scholarly Excellence Scale:			
Intellectual environment	3.23	3.29	3.23
Students' scholarship and research ability	3.00	3.20	3.05
Faculty's scholarship and research ability	3.23	3.62	3.33
"This doctoral program is one of the best in the field."	3.23	3.33	3.37
Faculty Concern for Students Scale:			
Faculty interest in students' welfare and professional development	3.62	3.67	3.69
Many opportunities exist for faculty-student interaction outside class	3.08	2.70	2.95
Accessibility of faculty to students	3.69	3.35	3.53
Good faculty-student communication regarding students' needs, concerns, suggestions	3.46	3.29	3.30
Overall faculty-student relations	3.31	3.29	3.30

TABLE 4
BREAKDOWN OF QUALITY OF TEACHING SCALE

Item	Mean Ratings by:	
	Students	Alumni
Faculty Preparation for Courses	3.14	3.15
Evaluation Procedures	3.38	3.30
Constructive Criticism	3.26	3.28
Overall Quality	3.14	3.07
Teaching Methods	3.05	2.84
Faculty Helpfulness	3.43	3.28
Faculty Awareness of New Ideas	3.71	3.43

appreciable consensus in Table 3 that the doctoral program is "one of the best" and that the Institute is "an intellectually stimulating place for doctoral students to study."

The variance of opinion concerning faculty concern for students, which was mentioned previously, can be seen in Table 3 as attributable to a lack of opportunity for "interaction outside the classroom." Faculty interest in students, their accessibility to students, communication between the two groups, and overall faculty/student relations are consistently rated at 3.2 or higher.

On the seven items comprising the quality of teaching scale, the single mean rating below 3.05 in Table 4 has been computed for the alumni. This finding is attributable in part, to the fact that many of the earlier graduates were taught by faculty members no longer at the University of Georgia - a fact that was pointed out by two of the graduates who phoned to explain the "low rating" they were compelled to give.

The gist of these findings must be that faculty, students, and alumni are in significant agreement about the learning environment provided by the Institute, its scholarly climate, the quality of teaching, and the faculty's concern for students. Students and alumni perceive the Institute as an "environment" conducive to doctoral study and they express appreciation of the intellectual and/or academic stimulation they have received.

Program Objectives and Resources

The appropriateness of program objectives, the ease of intra-campus communications, and the use of other campus resources can be addressed by examining the responses of faculty, students, and graduates to specific items on the curriculum, departmental procedures, and available resources scales. As shown in Table 5, the mean ratings of faculty, students, and graduates suggest substantial agreement about the depth and variety of course offerings, opportunities that students have to pursue individual projects, and the flexibility of program requirements in meeting student needs. Students and alumni rate the interaction of their doctoral program and related disciplines below the 3.0 they have given other curricular matters, but it is not obvious how the term "related disciplines" may have been interpreted. It is reasonably certain that students and alumni interpreted "related disciplines" as the twenty-hours-outside-education they take.

More directly related to the appropriateness of program objectives are items on the departmental procedures scale pertaining to "agreement between degree requirements and stated objectives," the relevance of degree requirements to anticipated work in the field, and

TABLE 5
CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Item	Mean Ratings by:		
	Faculty	Student	Alumni
Curriculum Scale:			
Interaction between department and other related disciplines	3.15	2.85	2.95
Depth in subject matter in course offerings	3.31	3.19	3.19
Opportunities for students to pursue individual projects	3.77	3.45	3.42
Variety of course and program offerings	3.31	3.10	3.33
Flexibility of program to meet student needs	3.54	3.33	3.40
Departmental Procedures Scale:			
Department helps graduates find appropriate employment	3.85	3.21	3.00
Agreement between degree requirements and stated objectives of department	3.43	3.42	3.60
Relevance of courses in related fields to meet degree requirements	3.23	3.21	3.47
Administration of degree requirements	3.54	3.47	3.47
Relevance of degree requirements to anticipated work	3.54	3.32	3.36
Quality of advising		3.05	3.21

the relevance of courses in related fields to degree requirements. On these three items no mean rating by the three groups falls below 3.2 and graduates of the program, as discussed previously in connection with their personal characteristics, give the compatibility of program objectives and requirements a firm 3.6 rating. This interpretation is borne out by the finding that only one faculty member, one student, and one graduate rated the agreement of degree requirements and stated objectives as "fair." None of the 88 respondents rated the agreement as "poor."

In terms of the resources available to doctoral students, all three groups of respondents are in agreement about the quality of library holdings ($M=3.2$ or higher). Only the faculty were asked about the adequacy of physical and financial resources, however, and at least one faculty member has indicated that these are "poor." Two faculty members have rated these resources "fair" while the remaining ten respondents regard resources as "good" or "excellent." With respect to facilities and equipment, graduates of the program have assigned lower ratings ($M=2.8$) than faculty ($M=3.1$) or students ($M=3.0$). Although slight, this variance of opinion could easily be a function of when the alumni were engaged in their doctoral studies.

A candid interpretation of scales and items related to program requirements and stated objectives should underscore their compatibility to each other and their relevance to anticipated work in the field. Faculty, students, and alumni are in significant agreement about the depth and variety of coursework and opportunities that facilitate student learning. Only in the matter of physical facilities and financial resources is there a hint of limitations. The professional staff of the Institute would be most willing to conclude that their physical facilities should be improved and their financial resources increased.

Student Commitment and Satisfaction

The doctoral program's "general" mission appears to be well-addressed in scales dealing with student commitment and satisfaction, faculty performance and expectations, and the experiences of students in completing their doctoral dissertations and seeking professional employment. Assessment findings on these scales and their particular items imply strongly that the doctoral program is an effective program of preparation for professional employment; that it serves well the expectations and preferences of students entering and completing the program; and that the program is meeting well an obvious societal and professional need.

Faculty and students are in agreement that student commitment to the program is substantial. As shown in Table 6, the faculty are not

TABLE 6
BREAKDOWN OF STUDENT COMMITMENT/MOTIVATION SCALES

Item	Mean Ratings by:	
	Faculty	Students
Students do a lot of unassigned reading in the field	2.75	3.05
Students handle course assignments with care and responsibility	3.58	3.57
Students demonstrate enthusiastic involvement with field in informal discussions	3.25	3.43
Students generally complete projects successfully despite one or more setbacks	3.25	3.52

certain that students do a great deal of unassigned reading but they agree that students handle course assignments well; that they are enthusiastically involved in their studies; and that they persevere in the completion of coursework. Students, on the other hand, agree in Table 7 that they have learned a great deal in the program; that the program provided good preparation for professional work; that they would not transfer without good cause; and that they would advise friends to enter the program.

Faculty perceive in Table 8 no barriers to student learning in evaluation procedures, teaching methods, and the overall quality of instruction within the program. They assign the highest single rating in the entire survey (3.92) to the freedom they have in teaching and research (see Appendix A for further evidence of the faculty's research and scholarship).

In Table 9, graduates of the program rate their learning experiences in conducting a dissertation in much the same manner. The dissertation is apparently more relevant to the development of professional skills and employment demands than it was to the coursework they took but they are evidently pleased with the freedom they had in selecting a topic for study, their opportunities or arrangements to consult with faculty, and the opportunity or freedom they had for individual expression.

They are somewhat less pleased with procedures for selecting committee members and a major professor – an expression that makes sense in view of the limited number of faculty who could serve as major professors or members of advisory and examining committees. Only slightly higher is the rating assigned their satisfaction with the supervision received in carrying out the requirements of their dissertations.

In judging the value of their doctoral studies for purposes of employment, graduates of the program give a remarkably informative evaluation of the program. Mean ratings are 3.1 or higher for all scales with the exception of "technical skills" (M=2.9) and the "cultural or social life of the university" (M=2.4). The value of coursework in higher education and the value of coursework "outside education" receive exactly the same mean rating (3.2) while the value of "association with major professor" and the value of "experience of working on the dissertation" receive a mean rating of 3.3 each. Only two graduates express reservations about their experience as graduate assistants, and only one graduate regards the knowledge gained in coursework or research as of "very little value."

In brief, the assessment results provide commendable evidence that whatever student needs and expectations might be, the doctoral program serves those needs and expectations well. Survey findings

TABLE 7
BREAKDOWN OF STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH PROGRAM SCALE

Item	Mean Ratings by:	
	Students	Alumni
"I have learned a great deal as a doctoral student in the department"	3.50	3.67
Department provides very good preparation for professional work	3.47	3.42
"I would advise a friend with similar interest to study in this department"	3.70	3.67
If i had a chance to go to another school without losing much in transfer, I would go		
4 - Disagree strongly	60%	
3 - Disagree with reservations	25%	
2 - Agree with reservations	10%	
1 - Agree strongly	5%	
Omit	0%	
Mean	3.40	

TABLE 8
BREAKDOWN OF FACULTY WORK ENVIRONMENT SCALE

Item	Mean Ratings by: Faculty
Faculty satisfaction with academic freedom relative to teaching and research	3.92
Faculty satisfaction with influence on departmental policies and decisions	3.50
Compatibility of faculty view of graduate education and department's emphasis	3.38
Personal relationships among department faculty	3.23
If I had a reasonable offer, I would move to another university	
4 - Disagree strongly	62%
3 - Disagree with reservations	15%
2 - Agree with reservations	15%
1 - Agree strongly	0%
Omit	8%
Mean	3.50

TABLE 9
BREAKDOWN OF ALUMNI DISSERTATION EXPERIENCES SCALE

Item	Mean Ratings by: Alumni
Integration of dissertation research and coursework	2.88
Freedom to select topic	3.47
Formal and informal arrangements for consultation with faculty	3.30
Procedures for selecting committee members and major professor	2.98
Expected scope of research problem	3.19
Satisfaction with supervisory relationship with committee members and major professor	3.16
Opportunity for creative thinking and individual expression	3.26
Relevance of dissertation experience to employment demands	3.21
Quality of writing expected in final document	3.33
Relevance of dissertation experience to other professional skills	3.33

TABLE 10

BREAKDOWN OF VALUE OF EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR EMPLOYMENT SCALE

Item	Mean Ratings by:
	Alumni
Value of required departmental courses	3.24
Value of coursework in other departments	3.24
Value of association with other professors	3.12
Value of elective departmental courses	3.28
Value of association with major professor	3.37
Value of association with fellow doctoral students	3.28
Value of dissertation experiences	3.37
Value of knowledge gained in course or research work	3.33
Department's standards of scholarly excellence	3.12
Value of technical skills learned	2.95
Value of experience as a research assistant	3.35

imply strongly that program objectives and faculty expectations are clearly communicated to students; that the graduates and students experience no disadvantage whatsoever from the placement of the program in a service agency of the university; and that program requirements and content are obviously compatible with stated objectives and expectations.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

The implications of self-assessment for program improvement are many and direct. Those aspects of the program with which students and alumni are particularly pleased should be strengthened, and activities or functions for which any reservation has been expressed should be examined closely. Although only four students expressed some reservation about the value of their graduate assistantships, the professional staff should make a concerted effort to make graduate assistantships more professionally meaningful to students under their supervision. And although students and alumni have given the faculty "high marks" in the quality of their teaching, the quality of classroom instruction is a matter about which all faculty members should be concerned.

The sum of self-assessment findings and conclusions may be that the fabric of the doctoral program in higher education is sound and whole – but wrinkles and creases do exist. None of these may be peculiar to the doctoral program in higher education, and all may be more typical of other graduate programs in other fields. But each wrinkle or crease should receive attention because the resources and capabilities of the Institute are conducive to continued improvement of the doctoral program. The self-assessment has taken place at a time when other organizational changes suggest opportunities for improvement. For example, having its own graduate coordinator would permit the doctoral program to iron out several wrinkles in procedures for admitting and advising graduate students.

Perhaps the most significant findings of the self-assessment pertain to a previously recognized need to strengthen the role and responsibilities of the major professor. Steps have already been taken to strengthen the major professor's role by: (1) improving the advice and consultation students receive on their approved programs of study, (2) placing student internships directly under the supervision of the major professor, (3) earlier identification of the student's research interests and capabilities, (4) better use of EHI 765 for independent study/research projects, and (5) closer direction and guidance in all phases of planning, organizing, implementing, and writing the doctoral dissertation.

Other results of self-assessment must be interpreted as a strong "vote of confidence" in the flexibility of program objectives and requirements – and their accommodation of diverse learning needs and interests. There are

requirements in two courses that should be tightened; one course that should be phased out; and a revision of title in another course. But nothing in the self-assessment findings demands substantial revisions in degree requirements as such. If the self-assessment results are read accurately, they fully endorse the requirement of twenty-hours-outside-education, an internship of at least one quarter's length, and the "elbow room" given students in their choice of dissertation topics. In particular, the responses of alumni imply that minor adjustments in some course requirements, more consistent teaching styles, and perhaps closer contact with some members of the faculty would remove the slight dissatisfactions they have expressed. There is other evidence to suggest that better assistance in the choice of a dissertation topic and closer supervision and direction in writing the dissertation would accomplish most of the preferred changes graduates of the program would like to see.

In conclusion, this report should emphasize the extensive agreement that has been found among faculty, students, and alumni. The quality of any doctoral program is elusive, and participants in the self-assessment may or may not accurately perceive the quality of the doctoral program in higher education. The responses of 88 participants suggest, nonetheless, a "consensual validation" of the doctoral program in higher education and testify -- we trust -- to its quality.

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- Dressel, Paul L. and Mayhew, Lewis B. *Higher Education As a Field of Study*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974.
- Holbrook, Willisia and Galvin, Marc A. "Coursework and Employment of Doctoral Graduates in Higher Education." Unpublished Report, Institute of Higher Education, University of Georgia, 1980.

APPENDIX A
BREAKDOWN OF FACULTY RESEARCH ACTIVITIES SCALES

Item	Responses by Faculty		
	Yes	No	Mean
Received award or other recognition for outstanding research or scholarly writing	46%	54%	1.54
Journal referee for professional articles in the field in last two years	69%	31%	1.31
Received outside funding for research, etc. in last three years	23%	77%	1.77
Editor of professional journal or member of editorial board	77%	23%	1.23
Have institutional or department grant for research this year	38%	62%	1.62
Have funding from outside for research	23%	77%	1.77
Served on government or foundation review committees or national advisory councils in last three years	50%	43%	1.46
Received an award or other recognition for outstanding professional practice	57%	43%	1.43
Held an office or served on a committee of state or regional professional organization	93%	7%	1.07
Received an award or other recognition for outstanding teaching	57%	43%	1.43
Held an office or served on the board of a national professional organization	71%	29%	1.29